

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD
Austin, Texas

FISCAL NOTE, 82ND LEGISLATIVE REGULAR SESSION

April 19, 2011

TO: Honorable Pete Gallego, Chair, House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence

FROM: John S O'Brien, Director, Legislative Budget Board

IN RE: HB3546 by Anderson, Charles "Doc" (Relating to requiring the performance of an autopsy when death is caused or apparently caused by suicide.), **As Introduced**

No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated.

The bill would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure to require a justice of the peace to order a complete autopsy on a body if the deceased committed suicide or circumstances indicate the death may have been caused by suicide. If a medical examiner believes that the deceased committed suicide or the circumstances indicate the death may have been caused by suicide, or an autopsy is requested by the district, criminal district, or county attorney, the medical examiner would be required to perform an immediate autopsy.

Under current statute, a medical examiner is mandated to determine the cause and manner of death in all cases of accident, homicide, suicide, and undetermined death.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2011.

Local Government Impact

There could be costs to a county, but the amounts would vary depending on the established procedures and policies, the cost of an autopsy and the number of deaths resulting from suicide.

According to the Office of Court Administration (OCA), Texas had approximately 2,400 suicides in 2005. If the cost of the autopsy is not paid for by the family of the deceased, a county may have to absorb the costs. The cost of a complete autopsy could be an estimated \$4,000.

In Travis County, an autopsy costs \$2,300 plus \$800 for an external examination, not including other administrative and court costs.

In Harris County, there is no cost to the public for an autopsy.

Source Agencies: 212 Office of Court Administration, Texas Judicial Council

LBB Staff: JOB, ESi, TP